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LAFAYETTE VISTAS

# Council Places Police Measure on November 7th Ballot

On November 7th, voters will decide whether there should be more police officers on patrol in Lafayette. The Lafayette Police Services Act was placed on the ballot by the Lafayette City Council after hearing public testimony at several City Council meetings this Spring and Summer. The need for a local tax to increase police services was originally proposed by residents following two local homicides and reports of increased methamphetamine arrests. If approved, the City would levy an annual parcel tax of $64 per residential equivalent for five years on all properties in Lafayette. The proceeds could only be used to pay for additional police services and equipment. *The purpose of this issue of Lafayette VISTAS is to introduce you to facts about the ballot measure, but not to persuade you to vote for or against the proposal.*

If approved by two-thirds of those who vote, the Police Services Act would authorize the City to levy $64 annually on each residential parcel equivalent in Lafayette for five years. The ballot language specifies that the proceeds of the levy can only be used to fund polices services in Lafayette, and cannot be used for any other purpose. The money cannot, for instance, be used for general governmental activities such as recreation, planning, engineering, new facilities, or overhead. Also, to verify that the proceeds would be used to provide additional police services and not to displace current expenditure levels, the measure also requires that the City Council appoint an independent Citizen's Oversight Committee to review the use of all the funds raised by the Police Services Act.

In fiscal year 2006-07, the City will spend roughly $3.9 million on police services, which is equivalent to 41% of Lafayette's $9.4 million General Fund budget. Compared to other general fund expenditures, Lafayette now spends twice as much on police as it does on public works maintenance and five times as much as planning, engineering and zoning combined. If approved, parcel tax proceeds would be applied to the police services budget in addition to the $3.9 million annual appropriation.

## *Current Service Levels*

The City contracts for most of its police services with Contra Costa County. The budget currently provides for equipment, investigation, SWAT, crime lab and other services, and for the following personnel:

- One Police Chief
- Two Sergeants
- Ten Patrol Officers (plus a K-9 Officer)
- One Traffic Enforcement Officer
- One Cop-on-a-Bike (downtown patrol and traffic enforcement)
- One Youth Diversion Officer
- One Investigator

This level of staffing ensures that two police officers are on duty at all times to protect and serve Lafayette residents. During periods of peak need, Monday through Friday from 8am to 3pm, there may be as many as five officers on duty. However, there are times on night shifts when, if one patrol officer is engaged in another public safety activity such as transporting a suspect to the County Jail in Martinez, Lafayette's 24,000 citizens and 14 square miles of land area are patrolled by just one officer. The proceeds of the tax would raise enough money to hire the equivalent of four additional officers, thus giving the city the capability to deliver at least three patrol officers to all shifts for the next five years.

## *Tax Based on Residential Equivalents*

The tax is structured to levy different amounts on properties depending on their use and according to their relative demand for service. All single family residential parcels will pay $64 per year. Only vacant parcels and exempt parcels, such as those owned by government agencies, will pay less than that. Other parcels will pay more depending on a factor that estimates their requirements for service compared to a single family home. A large apartment complex may pay up to 60 times the amount of a single family homeowner, and business parcels will pay 10 to 30 times more than a single family homeowner. The factors were assigned such that the tax would be split approximately 50-50 between neighborhoods and the downtown, which also reflects the level of police activity in each area. A comprehensive list of factors by land use code can be found on the City's website at **www.lovelafayette.org.**

*(continued on page 2)*

## *Ballot Language for November 7th Election*

The Lafayette City Council adopted a resolution on July 10, 2006 calling for a municipal election. Voters will consider the following ballot language on November 7, 2006:

**"LAFAYETTE POLICE SERVICES ACT"**

*To better protect the health, welfare and safety of Lafayette citizens by hiring additional police officers and purchasing equipment for the Police Department, shall the City be authorized to collect a parcel tax not to exceed $64 per year per residential equivalent unit for five years; with funds deposited into a restricted account and overseen by an independent citizen's oversight committee guaranteeing that the money cannot be used for other purposes?*

## Police Measure *(continued from front page)*

In arriving at the decision to place the Police Services Act on the ballot the Council considered, in addition to others, the following factors:

- When compared to other Contra Costa cities, Lafayette has the fewest officers per capita but higher crime rates than comparable cities such as Orinda and Danville (see chart in opposite column);
- Arrests for individuals in possession of dangerous drugs, specifically methamphetamine, have increased dramatically in the last two years. In 2004 we saw a 200% increase in meth arrests and in 2005 we saw another increase of 47%. It is typical for users of methamphetamine to commit other crimes, such as car and home burglaries, to support their habits and it is not uncommon to find stolen property in the possession of people arrested for illegal drug use.

### *Current Revenue Limits Police Services*

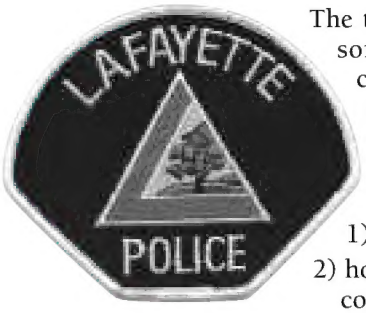
Given the City's current mix of services, Lafayette does not have sufficient resources to fund additional patrol officers. The City is and has historically been "revenue deprived" when compared to other cities. Sales tax revenues in Lafayette, for instance, are limited by our residents' collective desire to maintain a small-town downtown ambiance. Lafayette's "main street" retail environment focuses on servicing residents' daily needs and not attracting regional shoppers. We do not have the "big-box" stores (like Costco or Home Depot) or the auto malls that produce so much sales tax revenue for other cities, nor has the community indicated a desire to attract such merchants.

Lafayette is also considered a "property tax deprived" city, meaning that the City receives a lower proportion of property taxes paid by its homeowners than many other cities. When Lafayette incorporated in 1968, it did so as a "no property tax" city because that helped convince residents to support incorporation. Compared with citizens of nearby towns, taxes were lower in Lafayette. Proposition 13 changed that; taxes were equal everywhere, but Lafayette received none of the property taxes paid by its residents whereas other cities received up to 20 percent of each dollar of property tax. By 1988, Lafayette and other similarly situated cities were able to obtain up to 7 percent of the property taxes paid by property owners, or about half the amount received by other cities. This amount is not expected to change. Thus, while a new Lafayette homeowner whose property is assessed at $1 million pays $10,000 each year in property taxes, Lafayette receives just $700. The remainder goes to other agencies, including the State, the County, BART, CalTrans and the school districts.

The cost to add four additional police officers for five years averages $900,000 annually. This figure includes annual cost increases, equipment, supplies, insurance and vehicle expenses. Such funding can not be accomplished without cutting or reducing other City services or finding alternative revenue sources.

Please call the City offices at 284-1968 if you have questions about the ballot measure.

# How Does Lafayette Compare to Other Cities?




The table on the next page shows a comparison of the number of police officers per capita between Lafayette and other cities in the County. The Lafayette Police Department provides the lowest level of police officers per capita in the County which raises two questions:

1) how much police protection is enough?
2) how much would additional police officers cost?

## Comparison of 2005 Crime Statistics for Lafayette, Danville and Orinda

| | Lafayette | Danville | Orinda |
|---|---|---|---|
| Est. Population | 24,317 | 43,273 | 17,797 |
| Sworn Officers | 17 | 31 | 14 |
| Calls for Service | 22,961 | 31,228 | 15,050 |
| Citizens Per Officer | 1,430 | 1,396 | 1,271 |
| Calls for Service Per Officer | 1,351 | 1,007 | 1,075 |
| Murder | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Manslaughter | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Rape | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| Robbery | 7 | 9 | 6 |
| Agg. Assault | 4 | 8 | 0 |
| Burglary | 220 | 186 | 105 |
| Grand Theft | 26 | 54 | 16 |
| Auto Theft | 51 | 25 | 21 |
| Subtotal: Part One Crimes | 313 | 283 | 150 |
| Selected Part One Crimes Per 1,000 Residents | 13 | 7 | 8 |

Source: Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department

### *What Size Police Force is Appropriate for Lafayette?*

One law enforcement official, when asked this question, responded by saying "As much as the community needs in order to have peace of mind." This statement captures the fact that there is no definitive or generally accepted method for determining how many police officers a city should employ. However, adding at least four officers to the current police force will accomplish the following goals:

- Move the Citizens per Officer ratio closer to the average when compared with other cities in the County
- Provide capacity to deploy three patrol officers around the clock
- Decrease the ratio of calls for service per police officer such that response times may improve.

### *How Much Does an Officer Cost?*

The cost to add one patrol officer – including salary, benefits, insurance, equipment, and vehicle costs – total about $183,000 per year. In addition to these annual costs, there is a one-time start up cost of $4,276 per officer that covers equipment (pistol, handcuffs, badge, uniform, etc.) and hiring costs (polygraph, medical review, background investigation, etc.) Over the last several years, the County Sheriff's Office has increased these costs by 8-10% annually and we are assuming that rate of increase will continue.

## COMPARISON OF LAW ENFORCEMENT STAFFING LEVELS IN CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

*(Sorted by Citizens per Officer)*

| City | Population [1] | FY 06/07 Budget [2] | Sworn Staff [2] | Citizens Per Officer | Cost Per Citizen |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| El Cerrito | 23,407 | 7,864,374 | 45 | 520 | 336 |
| San Pablo | 31,344 | 11,130,686 | 55 | 570 | 355 |
| Richmond | 103,012 | 50,138,723 | 179 | 575 | 487 |
| Pinole | 19,604 | 5,482,478 | 28 | 700 | 280 |
| Pleasant Hill | 33,638 | 9,849,632 | 45 | 748 | 293 |
| Brentwood | 40,912 | 15,200,000 | 54 | 758 | 372 |
| Concord | 124,798 | 36,547,440 | 159 | 785 | 293 |
| Antioch | 101,049 | 23,222,561 | 124 | 815 | 230 |
| Hercules | 23,360 | 5,029,094 | 28 | 834 | 215 |
| **Median** | | | | **835** | **263** |
| Pittsburg | 62,605 | 16,438,024 | 75 | 835 | 263 |
| Walnut Creek | 66,501 | 19,529,652 | 78 | 853 | 294 |
| Clayton | 10,982 | 1,719,871 | 11 | 998 | 157 |
| San Ramon | 51,027 | 13,694,559 | 50 | 1,021 | 268 |
| Martinez | 36,818 | 8,740,937 | 31 | 1,188 | 237 |
| Oakley | 28,265 | 5,831,491 | 23 | 1,229 | 206 |
| Moraga | 16,435 | 2,342,247 | 13 | 1,264 | 143 |
| Orinda | 17,797 | 3,200,000 | 14 | 1,271 | 180 |
| Danville | 43,273 | 6,296,068 | 31 | 1,396 | 145 |
| **Lafayette** | **24,317** | **4,014,024** | **17** | **1,430** | **165** |

[1]California Department of Finance Statistics
[2]Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department

# LAFAYETTE POLICE SERVICES ACT

# *Frequently Asked Questions*

1. ***Why can't the City fund a higher level of police services like Danville, Orinda, Moraga and Walnut Creek do without a special tax?***
   Lafayette spends 41% of its General Fund budget on police services. In addition, the City recognizes that it also has a significant road repair problem and has tried to address the issue each year by contributing $1 million in General Funds to pavement management projects. The Council has tried for several years to balance these competing priorities and cannot fund additional police services without cutting or reducing other services.

2. ***How will improvements in services be measured?***
   Each year the Police Chief prepares a comprehensive report to the City Council detailing the activities of the department, including trend statistics on crime, arrests and response times. This system will allow the community to evaluate the effectiveness of the Police Services Act over the next five years. In addition, the Act provides for accountability because the Chief's report will also be reviewed by an independent citizen's committee to verify that the proceeds of the tax are being spent effectively.

3. ***What happens to the tax and level of police services after the five years are over?***
   The tax will need to be renewed after five years or the staffing levels in the police department will be reduced.

4. ***Why are additional police needed since we used to have an even smaller force and there has been minimal population growth?***
   While the population has stayed almost the same over the last 10 years, there has been a 20% increase in the number of calls for police service in addition to a 300% increase in methamphetamine arrests over the last several years.

5. ***Will additional officers focus on serious crimes rather than minor traffic violations?***
   Additional officers will be added to the late afternoon, evening and overnight shifts. While the officers will certainly enforce the traffic laws, that will not be their primary focus.

6. ***How much will response times improve if the officers are added?***
   It is impossible to predict how much response times will change given that the nature of police calls vary significantly; certain situations take longer to resolve than others. However, since the addition of officers will reduce the number of calls that each officer must handle on any given shift, response times may also improve – particularly at times when one officer is out of the jurisdiction taking suspects to the Martinez jail.

7. ***Why don't we have our own police force instead of contracting with the County?***
   The City of Lafayette has relatively few police officers as compared with most other cities, and therefore does not realize the economies of scale that larger cities do. By contracting with the County, the City is able to obtain resources that would not otherwise be economically feasible for a City of our size. These include comprehensive training, records management, property and evidence storage, internal affairs, a SWAT team, and backup staffing.

8. ***Why are we proposing a police tax when our roads still need fixing?***
   The City still faces a $23 million paving backlog, which if not addressed will increase over time. However, with the defeat of the Neighborhood Road Repair Tax in 2004, the City's Road Repair Task Force had to consider alternative financing strategies. The task force is continuing to study the available options and is expected to make a recommendation to the City Council in early 2007.

## CITY DIRECTORY

For Council Members call: **284-1968**

### *Council Members*

| | |
|---|---|
| Ivor Samson | **Mayor** |
| Carol Federighi | **Vice Mayor** |
| Mike Anderson | **Council Member** |
| Carl Anduri | **Council Member** |
| Don Tatzin | **Council Member** |

Messages to **all** Council Members:
**cityhall@lovelafayette.org**

### *Administration*

| | |
|---|---|
| **General Reception and** | **284-1968** |
| **Steven Falk, City Manager** | **Fax: 284-3169** |
| Tracy Robinson, Admin. Srv. Dir. | **299-3227** |
| Gonzalo Silva, Financial Srv. Mgr. | **299-3213** |
| Joanne Robbins, City Clerk | **299-3210** |

### *Community Development*

| | |
|---|---|
| Ann Merideth, Director | **299-3218** |
| Tony Coe, Engineering Srv. Mgr. | **284-1951** |
| Niroop Srivatsa, Planning Srv. Mgr. | **284-1976** |
| Ron Lefler, Public Works Srv. Mgr. | **299-3214** |
| P.W. Hotline (to report problems) | **299-3259** |

*If you observe illegal dumping in creeks & storm drains or accidental spills on roads, call Contra Costa Hazardous Materials Division 646-2286.*

### *Lamorinda School Bus Program*

| | |
|---|---|
| Juliet Hansen, Program Mgr. | **299-3216** |
| | **Or 299-3215** |

### *Parks, Trails and Recreation* **284-2232**

| | |
|---|---|
| Jennifer Russell, Director | |
| Senior Services | **284-5050** |
| Teen Programs | **284-5815** |

### *Police Services*

| | |
|---|---|
| Emergency: 24 Hours | **911** |
| Police Dispatch: 24 Hours | **284-5010** |
| Police Business Office: | **283-3680** |

*Anonymous Tipline, Traffic Enforcement, Suggestions & LEARN (Laf. Emergency Action Response Network), 299-3232 X 2205*

| | |
|---|---|
| *Fax* | **284-3169** |
| *Address* | **3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd. #210, Lafayette, CA 94549** |
| Website: | **www.ci.lafayette.ca.us** |

**E-MAIL:** Council/staff members can be reached via e-mail using this address format:
**First Initial + Last Name @lovelafayette.org**
**Example: SFalk@lovelafayette.org**

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